

Washington, DC- Today Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) introduced his 2008 National Parks Package in the House of Representatives. On a conference call with the park superintendents for the affected National Park areas Rodriguez spoke about HR 6176, which would increase the size and preserve an important view shed for the Fort Davis National Historic Site, and about HR 6177, which would impact the Rio Grande River in and around Big Bend National Park.

"This National Parks Package will allow for further conservation, as well as boost tourism and economic growth in and around communities where our national parks are located," said **Rodriguez**. "Since I have the pleasure and responsibility of representing seven National Park areas in my expansive district, I will urge my colleagues to pass this package and help preserve our natural areas for generations to come."

Chuck Hunt, Superintendent of Fort Davis National Historic Site said "I'm thrilled Congressman Rodriguez is working to save the scenery behind Officers Row at Fort Davis National Historic Site. We have photos from the 1890's that show the scene just as it is today. It would be tragic to lose this historic scenery."

Bill Wellman, Superintendent of Big Bend National Park and The Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River said "This legislation would greatly enhance our ability to manage the river corridor."

The first bill in Rodriguez's 2008 National Parks Package, HR 6176, would affect the Fort Davis National Historic Site by allowing the National Park Service to acquire additional land for a site that has been the subject of concern for the community and conservationists. Since the current acreage cap of the Fort Davis Historic Site is 476, and the park currently occupies 473 acres of that allotment, an acreage cap increase would also be necessary, which the bill would allow the Park Service to do.

The second bill in Rodriguez's 2008 National Parks Package, HR 6177, would affect Big Bend National Park and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River by allowing for an extension of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River to the west through Big Bend National Park and removing

the threat of condemnation for current landowners within the Wild and Scenic River designation in Brewster and Terrell counties.

Rivers designated in the Wild and Scenic River system of which the federal, state, or local public land is 50 percent or greater, condemnation for fee title purchase of private lands is prohibited. In the case of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, by adding the approximately 50 miles within federal land it would remove the risk of condemnation for the property owners along the 118 miles East of Big Bend National Parks in Brewster and Terrell Counties.

The National Park Units in the Rodriguez's district include Big Bend National Park, The Rio Grande National Wild and Scenic River, Fort Davis National Historic Site, Lake Amistad National Recreation Area, El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park.

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Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez is a former social worker who currently serves on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and the powerful House Committee on Appropriations. For more information on Congressman Rodriguez please visit <http://rodriguez.house.gov>.